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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 002816

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)
SUBJECT: SOMALILAND NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION TRAINING
IN ADDIS ABABA

Classified By: CDA Roger Meece. Reasons 1.4 (B/D).

¶1. (SBU) CDA was invited to a November 22 dinner hosted by the British Ambassador for the members of the Somaliland National Electoral Commission (NEC). The members of the commission are in Addis Ababa for training in electoral systems and procedures, apparently organized by the British, under the general direction of the former chair of the Ghana electoral commission, who was also in attendance at the dinner. Members of the technical committee being formed in support of the Somaliland electoral process in accordance with the recently concluded agreements were also present, and these included two representatives of the Republican International Institute (IRI), and at least one former employee of the Carter Center, a Canadian citizen now working with a different international agency. Rounding out the dinner participants were several British diplomats and the Swedish Ambassador, who is also the current European Union chair.

¶2. (C) The CDA was seated between the chair and vice chair of the NEC. In response to questions, both firmly asserted that the newly reconstituted NEC has had a series of positive meetings. While various members certainly hold differing views, the NEC members stated that there is a positive approach shared by the NEC members in the interests of achieving solutions and ensuring a successful election exercise. NEC dinner interlocutors also indicated that they were satisfied with the composition of the supporting technical team. While acknowledging that there are likely further difficulties ahead, the NEC members expressed optimism about the future process.

¶3. (SBU) The Swedish Ambassador will be hosting a reception for the NEC members on Wednesday evening, November 24 on behalf of the EU.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: The only indication of GOE involvement to-date in the NEC training exercise is the presumed facilitation of visas and other arrangements associated with the Addis venue location. Delegation members indicated, however, that they may meet with MFA State Secretary Tekeda before the delegation leaves town. End comment.

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